A gentleman almost forspent with speed[9],
That stopp'd by me to breathe his bloodied horse:
He ask'd the way to Chester; and of him
I did demand, what news from Shrewsbury.
He told me that rebellion had bad luck.
And[1] that young Harry Percy's spur was cold:
With that, he gave his able horse the head,
And, bending forward, struck his armed heels[1]
Against the panting sides of his poor jade[2]
Up to the rowel-head[3]; and, starting so,
He seem'd in running to devour the way[4],
Staying no longer question.

9 —FORSPENT with speed,] *To forspend* is to *waste*, to *exhaust*. So, in Sir A. Gorges' translation of Lucan, b. vii.:
«< .----------crabbed sires *forspent* with age."
STEEVENS.

[1] —ARMED heels—] Thus the quarto 1600. The folio, 1623, reads—"able heels;" the modern editors, without authority—"*agile* heels." STEEVENS.

[2] — poor jade —] *Poor jade is* used, not in contempt, but In compassion. *Poor jade* means the *horse wearied with his journey*.
Jade, however, seems anciently to have signified what we now call a *hackney*, a beast employed in drudgery, opposed to a horse kept for show, or to be rid by its master. So, in a comedy called A Knack to know a Knave, 1594:
" Besides, I'll give you the keeping of a dozen *jades*,
&c. And now and then meat for you and your *horse*."
This is said by a *farmer* to a *courtier*. STEEVENS.
Shakspeare, however, (as Mr. Steevens has observed,) certainly does not use the word as a term of contempt: for King Richard the Second gives this appellation to his favourite horse Roan Barbary, on which Henry the Fourth rode at his coronation:
" *Th&t jade* hath eat bread from my royal hand/"
MALONE.

[3] — rowel-head ;] I think that I have observed in old prints the *rowel* of those times to have been only a single spike.
JOHNSON.
. Dr. Johnson had either forgotten the precise meaning of the word *rowel*, or has made choice of inaccurate

language in applying it to the single spiked spur, which he had seen in old prints. The former signifies the moveable spiked wheel at the end of a spur, such as was actually used in the time of Henry the Fourth, and long before the other was laid aside. Shakspeare certainly meant the spur of his own time, DOUCE.